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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3784th meeting of the Security Council, held on 29 May 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its support for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as they begin a new period in their history. The Council respects the legitimate national aspirations of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to achieve peace, national reconciliation and progress in the political, economic and social fields to the benefit of all, and opposes any interference in its internal affairs.

"The Security Council recalls its resolution 1097 (1997) of 18 February 1997 which endorses the United Nations five-point peace plan.

"The Security Council welcomes the end of the fighting and expresses its satisfaction that stability has begun to return to the country.

"The Security Council reaffirms the national sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and calls for the withdrawal of all external forces, including mercenaries.

"The Security Council, in accordance with the United Nations five-point peace plan, calls for the rapid and peaceful settlement of the crisis through dialogue and the convening of an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region. The Council also reaffirms the statement of its President of 30 April 1997 (S/PRST/1997/24) calling for rapid agreement on peaceful transitional arrangements leading to the holding of democratic and free elections with the participation of all parties.

"The Security Council believes that the convening of an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity will be essential in promoting regional peace and stability.

"The Security Council, in accordance with the United Nations five-point peace plan, calls for protection and security for all refugees and displaced persons and facilitation of access to humanitarian assistance. It reiterates its call for full respect for the rights of refugees and displaced persons, and for access and safety for humanitarian relief workers. It also reiterates in the strongest terms its call for complete cooperation with the United Nations mission investigating reports of massacres, other atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law in the country, including to provide it full and immediate access and to ensure its security. It is particularly concerned by reports that refugees in the east of the country are being systematically killed. It calls for an immediate end to the violence against refugees in the country.

"The Security Council expresses its deep appreciation to the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity and their Special Representative, to the Government of South Africa, and to all those inside and outside the region for their efforts to facilitate a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo."